

# Easing into a New Home

When downsizing or transitioning to a new residence, preparation is key

By Adrian Walter-Ginzburg • October 29, 2009

One of the hardest changes to deal with emotionally and financially as a senior citizen is a move from one living arrangement to another. Whether needing to de-clutter and downsize, moving to more appropriate housing—such as assisted living or a nursing home, to accommodate disabilities—or conducting an estate sale or tag sale to raise funds, seniors and their families are often compelled to make transitions, often against their will. These moves involve many steps, but if planned in advance and done properly, the transition can leave both the seniors and their families in a better situation than before.

Here are some items to consider when faced with a transition:

- **Getting Prepared:** When a move is done with lots of time for planning and organizing, the individual will find him or herself in a more suitable, de-cluttered and safe environment at the end of the process. Having a plan in place may prevent impulsive decisions and financial losses that can result when a move is undertaken too quickly. With a moving plan written “just in case,” no time will be lost in trying to figure out what to do, and there will be no financial or emotional surprises. Even in the face of an emergency, the transition can be carried out in an orderly way to maximize the value of the household goods in an estate sale that may even result in a profit for the family.

Without pre-planning or giving thought to disposal of precious items, those things can end up as trash, sold at rock-bottom prices or, in the worst case, the family will be forced to pay for the disposal of items that could actually have been sold. While planning, consider if appraisals are needed as part of the process and if there are any family members who can actively participate.

- **Making a Move and Handling the Heirlooms:** Many transitions are the result of an unexpected emergency such as a stroke, fracture, divorce or the uncertain economy. A plan will help families keep precious heirlooms that mean so much and are full of a lifetime of memories, but get rid of meaningless stuff that accumulates over the years. When downsizing or making a transition, it is important to figure out what to do with items that simply take up space or have no value. Do you need to send personal items to family and friends in distant cities? Do you know how to operate online auctions? Do you want to maximize your return by offering items for sale locally, nationally and through specialty venues?
- **What You Can Do:** The most important thing is to be prepared, whether you are transitioning yourself or transitioning a loved one. This means that you should know what you want to give to loved ones, what you want to take to a new place, what should be donated to a favorite charity and what should be sold.

If this process is undertaken in an orderly way, the emotional and financial value of your household goods will be maximized, and your living situation will be improved.

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